

**AIR FORCE SPECIALTY CODE 38FX  
FORCE SUPPORT OFFICER  
CAREER FIELD EDUCATION AND TRAINING PLAN**



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**Section A: General Information**

1. **Purpose:** The 38F Career Field Education and Training Plan provides a development strategy for the officers, supervisors, commanders, development teams, and mentors to develop, manage, and conduct 38F education and training. This plan outlines the execution of education, training, and experience opportunities to ensure successful development of 38Fs into strategic leaders of human capital assets.
2. **Use:** All 38Fs are expected to complete all required trainings in accordance with the timelines provided to ensure continual development of skills and knowledge necessary to execute A1 priorities.
3. **Coordination and Approval:** The 38F Career Field Manager (CFM) in coordination with the 38F Functional Manager (FM), are the approval authorities for this plan. The CFM will review this document annually to ensure currency and accuracy.

**Section B: 38F Development**

1. **The Continuum of Learning:** The Continuum of Learning (CoL) is the deliberate process of combining education, training, and experience to produce officers with the right expertise and competence to meet the Air Force’s operational needs. The CoL is comprised of three main pillars: Education, Training, and Experience. See **Figure 1**.
  - a. **Education:** Provides critical thinking skills, encourages exploration into unknown areas, and promotes creative problem solving. Its greatest benefit comes in unknown situations or new challenges; education prepares the individual for unpredictable scenarios.
  - b. **Training:** Focuses on structured skill sets and consistency in training performance. Thus, training provides the individual with skill expertise. Education and training together provide the tools for developing Airmen.
  - c. **Experience:** The continuously growing part of any Airman’s career and where the synthesis of education and training occurs.



**Figure 1.**

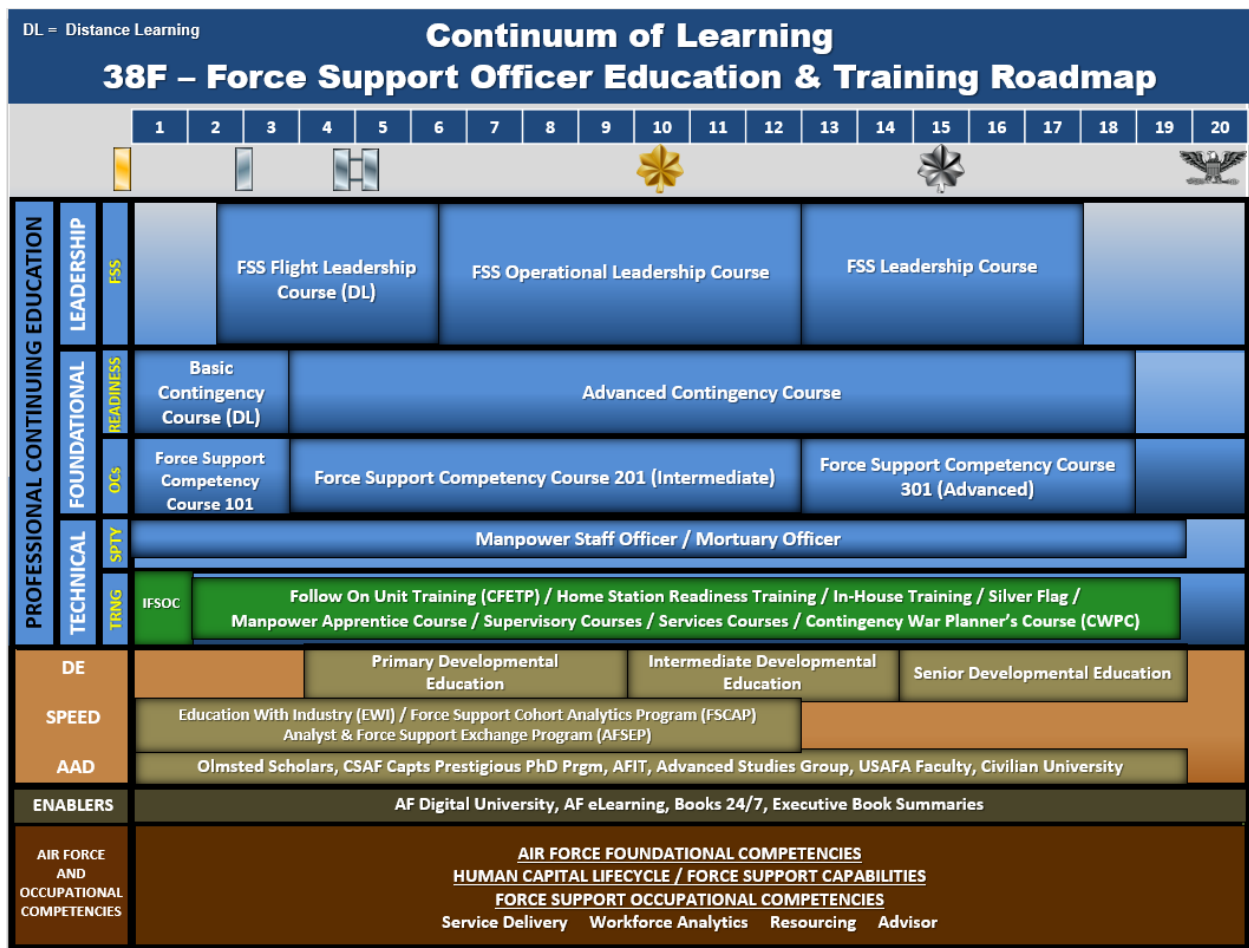
## 2. Force Support Training

- a. The Initial Force Support Officer Course (IFSOC) is hosted by the 335th Training Squadron, Keesler AFB, MS. It provides a basic orientation to A1 doctrine, mission, and capabilities in all areas of the Force Support community and formal field training. It is designed for new company grade accessions and cross-flow officers from other career fields. Field grade officers do not attend IFSOC.
- b. Follow-on Unit Training (FOUT) is designed to teach new officers operating procedures, requirements, and common practices that will enhance knowledge already gained at IFSOC. FOUT should be completed home-station within 24 months of graduating IFSOC or 96 Individual Drill Training (IDT) periods for Guard and Reserve personnel. Failure to complete FOUT can result in the removal of the AFSC. Waiver requests past 24 months should be sent to the CFM for consideration. Force Support Squadron commanders or senior career field leaders assigned to the organization are responsible for certifying FOUT within myTraining. Crossflow Field Grade Officers (FGOs) are expected to bridge the gap by completing required courses within the 38F Course Catalog that can be found on the 38F MilSuite.

## 3. Force Support Education

- a. The Force Support Professional Development School (FSPDS) is responsible for a large portion of the professional education programs available to 38Fs. The school is responsible for 38F force development strategy and for conducting professional continuing education courses that serve the officer, appropriated fund civilian and enlisted Force Support communities. FSPDS approaches education through three main focus areas: Leadership Development, Foundational Development, and Technical Development.
  - i. **Leadership Development:** Demonstrate competencies required to effectively lead people and manage resources at both installation-level and higher headquarters staff environments.
  - ii. **Foundational Development:** Demonstrate comprehension of basic, intermediate, and advanced Occupational Competencies required to perform the full range of Force Support capabilities at home-station and in deployed environments.
  - iii. **Technical Skills Development:** Demonstrate competencies required to perform a range of highly specialized functional skills at both installation-level and higher headquarters staff environments.

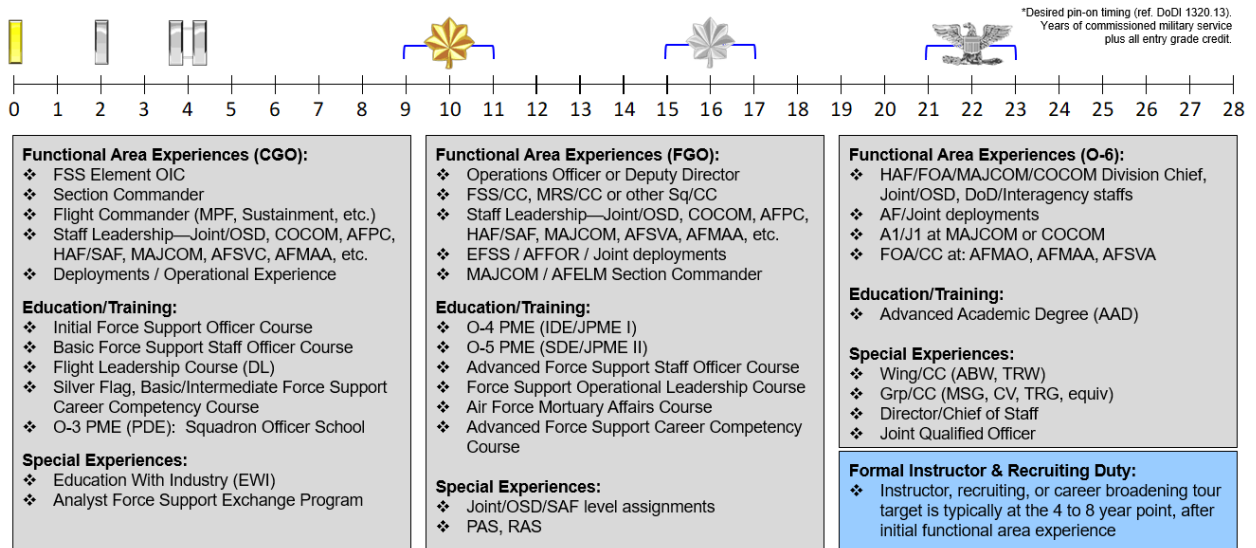
4. **38F Continuum of Learning:** The 38F Continuum of Learning Force Support Officer Education & Training Roadmap at **Figure 2** details the technical, foundational, and leadership professional continuing education courses that 38Fs will participate in during their careers.



**Figure 2.**

- 5. Force Support Experience/Developmental Paths:** There is no “one path” to success in a military career. Experience plays an important role in officer development and an officer builds their career one assignment at a time.
- a. 38Fs in their first 10 years are generally expected to:
    - i. Develop solid technical and operational experience in a broad range of Force Support capabilities, by serving in two or more core base-level assignments.
    - ii. Lead in key flight-level organizations or as a section commander.
    - iii. Serve on a staff assignment, if possible.
    - iv. Deploy, as needed, to generate operational credibility while enhancing knowledge of Force Support capabilities and occupational competencies. Deployments provide officers an opportunity to flex their critical thinking and resourcing skills that facilitate development.
    - v. (Optional) Participate in an out of core career broadening opportunity (EWI, OI&RSD, etc.).
  - b. After depth of experience within the squadron, officers should look to build more breadth through leadership roles with increasing levels of responsibility.
  - c. Officers are expected to complete Professional Military Education (PME) courses as they progress in rank. A milestone chart for PME windows can be found within the CFETP annexes located on the 38F milSuite page.

- d. Advanced Academic Degrees (AADs) are highly encouraged early in an officer's career however are not considered until assessing potential for promotion to Colonel. Officers can attend any accredited civilian institution or an Air Force sponsored program such as Advanced Academic Degree/Special Experience Exchange Duty (AAD/SPEED).
- e. **Figure 3** further dissects what we value, with an emphasis that all career paths are unique.



**Figure 3.**

- f. Previous CFETPs displayed a Career Field Pyramid that illustrated a false narrative about what a 38F's career should look like and is now obsolete. Our career field is so broad that no one has the same exact experiences or duty history. What happens if your first assignment is to HAF, AFPC, or another special program instead of the FSS? 38F Progression and Training Hierarchy (PATH) diagrams in **Figure 4** and **Figure 5** display assignment opportunities available to 38F officers throughout their career and essentially allows officers to choose their own adventure. The goal is to grow the best 38Fs, whether you decide to stay in 4 years, 8 years, or 20 years.
  - i. This is a guide and **does not** represent every possible career path or road to success.
  - ii. These sample diagrams can be used for planning purposes by individuals, commanders, and mentors.
  - iii. It is important to have a good balance of assignments, when possible each subsequent assignment being larger in scope, responsibility and development. For example, it is okay to be a section commander twice. Ideally the second section command is larger in terms of mission, scope, etc.
  - iv. While we understand leaders desire to have 38Fs as Executive Officers we need to also find a good balance with exec duties and core 38F duties.

# EXAMPLE P.A.T.H. Progression And Training Hierarchy

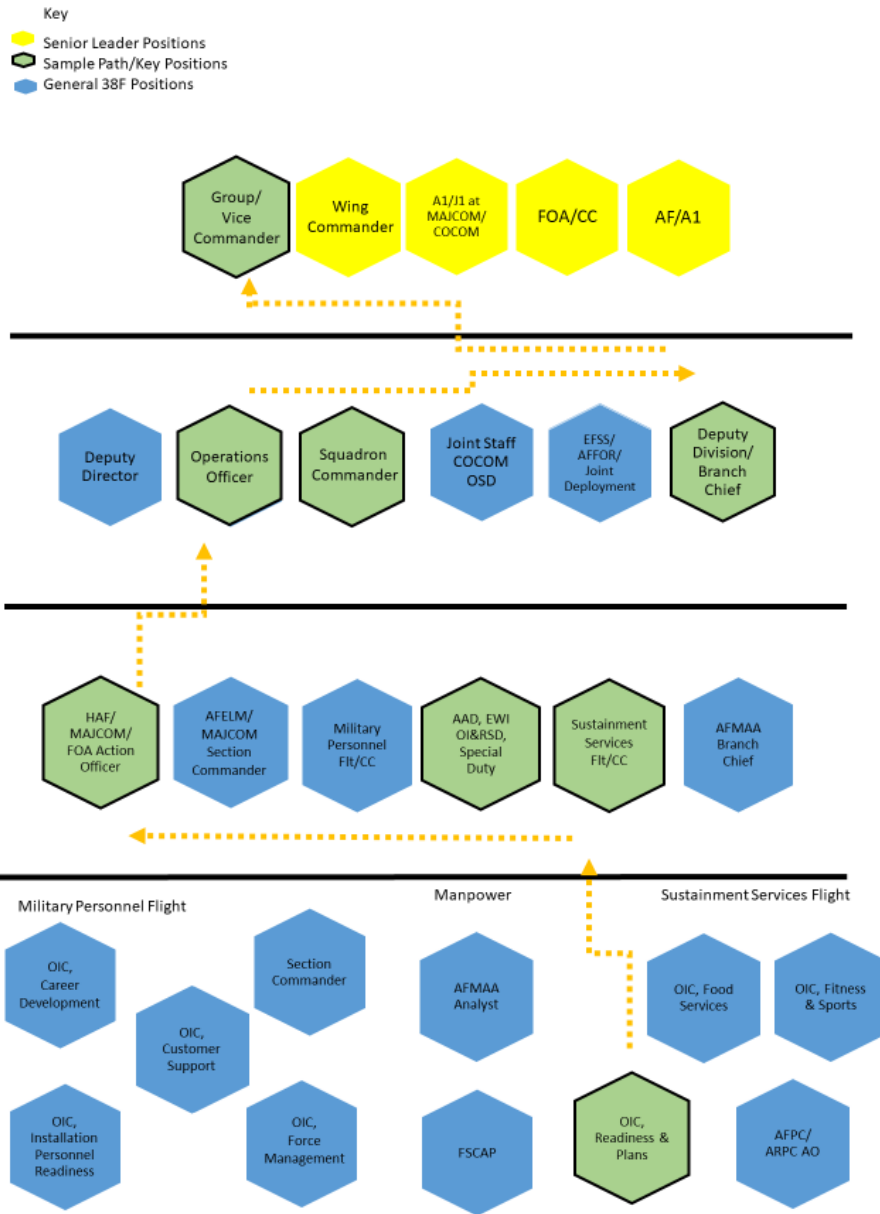


Figure 4.

# EXAMPLE P.A.T.H. Progression And Training Hierarchy

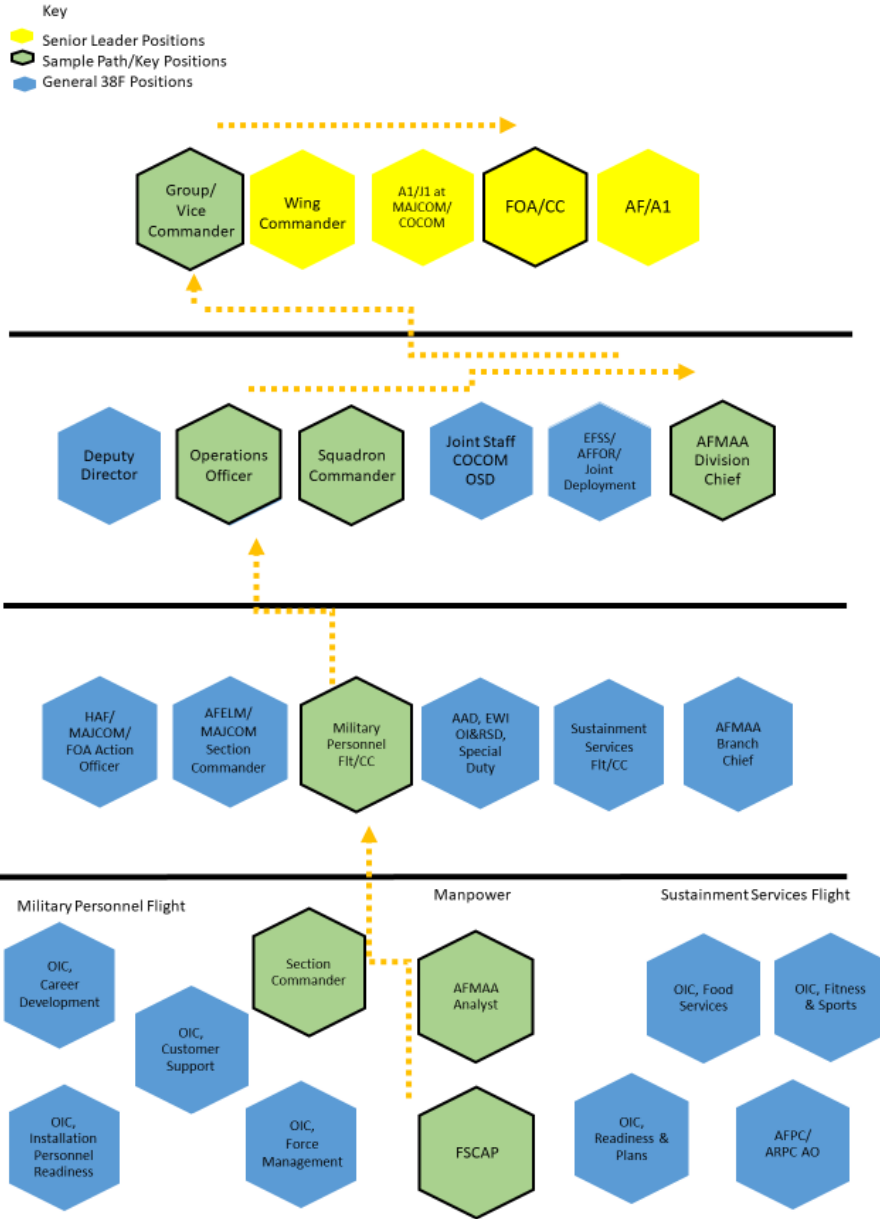


Figure 5.

ACRONYMS AND OFFICE SYMBOLS	
AAD – ADVANCED ACADEMIC DEGREE	EWI – EDUCATION WITH INDUSTRY
AF/A1 – HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE, MANPOWER, PERSONNEL & SERVICES	FOA CC – FORWARD OPERATING AGENCY COMMANDER
AFELM – AIR FORCE ELEMENT	FSCAP – FORCE SUPPORT COHORT ANALYTICS PROGRAM
AFFOR – AIR FORCE FORCES	HAF – HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE
AFMAA – AIR FORCE MANPOWER ANALYSIS AGENCY	MAJCOM – MAJOR COMMAND
AFPC/ARPC AO – AIR FORCE PERSONNEL CENTER /AIR RESERVE PERSONNEL CENTER ACTION OFFICER	OIC – OFFICER IN CHARGE
COCOM – COMBATANT COMMAND	OI&RSD – OFFICER INSTRUCTOR & RECRUITING SPECIAL DUTY
EFSS – EXPEDITIONARY FORCE SUPPORT SQUADRON	OSD – OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE



**Section C: Occupational Competencies**

1. **Force Support Occupational Competencies:** Competencies are the combination of knowledge, skills, and abilities that manifest in an observable, measurable pattern of behaviors required for mission success. See **Figure 6**. There are four 38F competencies.
  - a. **Service Delivery:** A culture of service is central to the Air Force Core Values and our role as Agile Combat Support providers. The Force Support community continually supports and takes care of people while at home-station and in deployed environments. A culture of service across the Force Support portfolio is accomplished by exceeding customer expectations by promoting a culture of support, trust and responsiveness.
  - b. **Resourcing:** Our resources are diverse, including people, manpower, money, equipment, and facilities. Officers must possess skills managing each of these resources to capitalize on emerging opportunities and to execute commander or senior leader objectives. Force Support resources enable the career field to execute programs, maintain service standards, and provide alternative solutions to achieve objectives.
  - c. **Work Force Analytics:** The Air Force is focused upon leveraging data as a strategic asset. Data analysis examines raw data by applying an algorithmic or mechanical process to find patterns and draw conclusions. Officers must be knowledgeable in identifying and understanding relevant data, correlation and causation relationships, and provide data-driven recommendations to senior leaders for decisions.
  - d. **Advisor:** Advising leaders is the culminating capability for Force Support officers; this competency requires the integration of all other competencies in order to deliver informed advice to leaders. Our community provides critical advice on personnel, manpower, and services matters to our military and civilian leadership. A capable 38F leader with refined advisor skills is able to influence superiors, peers, and subordinates in the decision-making process.

Occupational Competencies		Basic	Intermediate	Advanced	Cognitive Skills Link
		Lt	Capt	Maj	
Descriptive Behavior					
Service Delivery	The customer-centric alignment of human and technology resources in order to provide comprehensive Force Support products and services.	Values and examines customer experiences, products, and processes in order to establish service metrics, address reliability issues, lead improvement, and elevate concerns.	Guide the optimization of service delivery models with consideration for customer experience, mission requirements, impacts, and available resources.	Creates enterprise-wide service delivery models while managing risk, prioritizing competing resources, accounting for internal and external influences, and focusing on future requirements.	Creative Thinking
Resourcing	Control and integrate manning, funds, equipment and facilities through timely program and project management in order to provide and sustain Force Support capabilities.	Comprehends the diversity of resources within Force Support, identifies shortfalls, and initiates programming to support projects and plans.	Capitalizes on traditional and alternative resourcing methods to manage a program or project in terms of possible future benefits, risk reduction, and process improvement.	Advocates for and prioritizes critical resources while considering future plans, geopolitical considerations, mission requirements, and fiscal constraints.	Future Thinking
Workforce Analysis	Examining data to identify and understand correlation and cause-effect relationships in order to provide a basis for problem solving and decision making.	Understands the importance of data and how it can be utilized to assess performance, problem solving, and decision making. Identifies relevant data sources and available methods to collect, analyze, and report credible data.	Uses analytical experience to guide the collection and analysis of data in order to identify root causes, alternative solutions, and measure performance. Distills information for decision makers.	Examines data-driven recommendations to make decisions and refine organizational vision and strategy.	Analytical Thinking
Advisor	To represent the Force Support community by providing informed advice.	Applies situationally relevant resources and identifies risk and opportunities in order to develop and communicate informed recommendations.	Leverage operational expertise to anticipate and explain impacts to stakeholders in order to develop and communicate informed recommendations to subordinates, peers, and leadership.	Synthesizes and evaluates economic, political, and social factors in order to formulate strategy, develop recommendations, and communicate mission impacts for the enterprise.	Critical Thinking

**Figure 6.**




## ***Section D: Proficiency & Skill Level Upgrade***

- 1. Purpose:** Proficiency training requirements in this career field are defined in terms of tasks and knowledge requirements. This section outlines the specialty qualification requirements for entry, award, and retention of each Air Force Specialty level and Badge.
- 2. Qualified Level (38F3):**
  - a. For Company Grade Officers:**
    - i.** Completion of IFSOC is mandatory. A waiver from the 38F Career Field Manager is required if any portion of the course is not completed.
    - ii.** A minimum of 24 months of experience is mandatory. IFSOC counts towards the 24 months of experience. A minimum of 96 IDT periods for Air Reserve Components (ARC).
    - iii.** Completion of FOUT within 24 months of graduating IFSOC (96 IDT periods for ARC) and updated in myTraining. Failure to complete FOUT could result in loss of the AFSC.
    - iv.** Officers in training (i.e. FSCAP) can upgrade to 38F3 without completion of FOUT however, FOUT must be completed at the first operational assignment.
  - b. For Field Grade Officer crossflows:**
    - i.** Completion of the Basic and Intermediate Force Support Competency Courses through FSPDS.
    - ii.** A minimum of 12 months of experience is mandatory for RegAF and 48 IDT periods for ARC.
    - iii.** Completion of FOUT within 96 IDT periods for the ARC.
  - c. For Total Force CGOs and FGOs, all requirements must be certified by the Force Support Squadron commander or senior career field leader assigned to the organization. A waiver from the 38F Career Field Manager is required if the Follow-on Unit Training or other tasks cannot be completed within the required timeframe. ARC personnel will coordinate waivers with their component Career Field Manager.**
- 3. Staff Level (38F4):** Awarded based on position. Officers must be appointed to a staff position at the Air Staff, Major Command, Numbered Air Force, Field Operating Agency, Direct Reporting Unit, Joint Forces Headquarters, National Guard Bureau, or Combatant Command to achieve the Staff Level 38F4 Air Force Specialty Code. Officers will revert back to 38F1 or 38F3 will they are no longer serving in a 38F4 staff position.
- 4. The Force Support badge is awarded as follows:**
  - a. Basic badge:**
    - i.** CGOs: Completion of Initial Force Support Officer Course.
    - ii.** FGOs: Certified completion of all 38F3 qualified level requirements and 24 months in a 38F3 position.
  - b. Senior badge:** Certified completion of all 38F3 qualified level requirements, completion of the Intermediate Force Support Competency Course, 24 cumulative months as a flight commander, section commander, or 38F4 staff position, and seven years in the AFSC. This means that if an officer served 12 months as a flight commander and 12 months as a section commander, then the member meets the requirement. ARC members require 96 IDT periods as a flight commander, section commander, or 38F4 staff position, and seven satisfactory participation years in the AFSC.

- c. **Master badge:** Certified completion of the Advanced Force Support Competency Course, 24 cumulative months as an operations officer, deputy director, or squadron commander, and fifteen years in the AFSC. ARC members require 96 IDT periods as an operations officer, deputy director, or squadron commander, and fifteen satisfactory participation years in the AFSC.
- d. See **Figure 7** and **Figure 8** for illustration.

<b>Force Support Officer Badge and Skill Level Requirements - RegAF</b>				
<b>Badge and Qualification Levels</b>	<b>Basic</b> 	<b>38F3 Skill Level</b>	<b>Senior</b> 	<b>Master</b> 
<b>Education, Training, and Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Completion of IFSOC (CGOs)</li> <li>➤ Completion of Force Support Basic &amp; Intermediate Competencies Course (FGOs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Completion of IFSOC</li> <li>➤ Completion of FOUT within 24 months of graduating IFSOC</li> <li>➤ 24 months of experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Completion of all 38F3 skill level requirements</li> <li>➤ Completion of Force Support Intermediate Competency Course</li> <li>➤ 24 cumulative months as a flight commander, section commander, or 38F4 staff position (e.g., 12 months as Flt/CC &amp; 12 months as Section CC)</li> <li>➤ 7 Years in the AFSC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Completion of Advanced Force Support Competency course</li> <li>➤ 24 cumulative months as an operations officer, deputy director, squadron commander, or 38F4 staff position</li> <li>➤ 15 years in the AFSC</li> </ul>

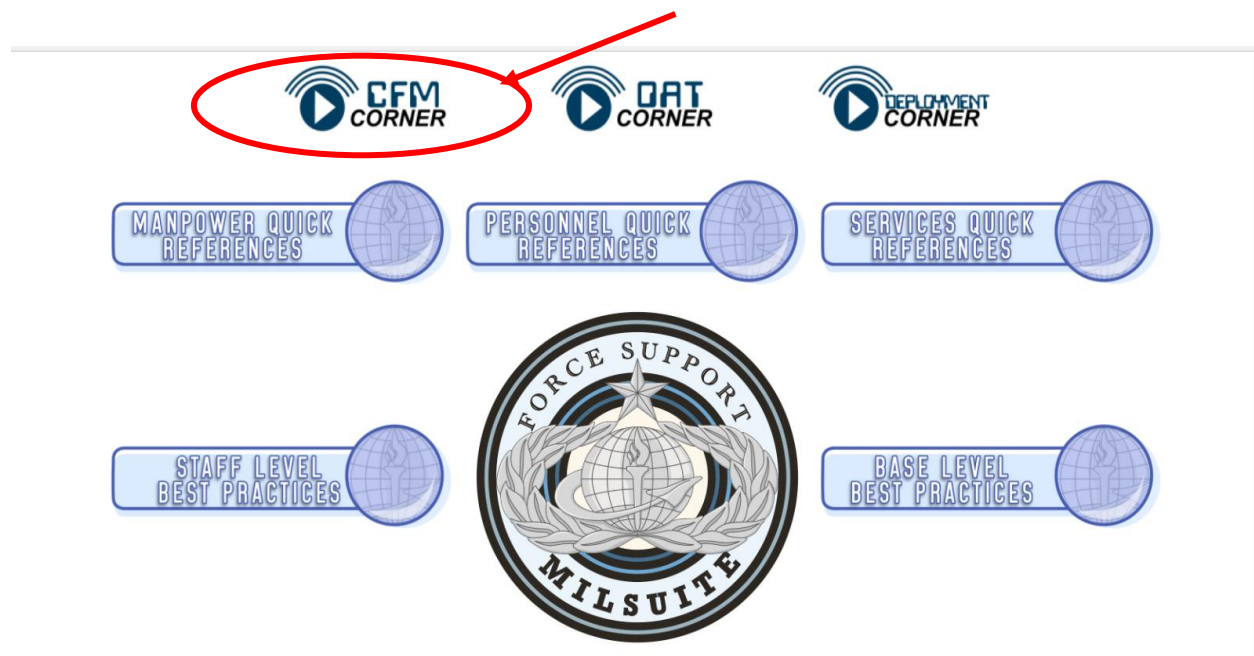
**Figure 7.**

<b>Force Support Officer Badge and Skill Level Requirements – Air Reserve Components</b>				
<b>Badge and Qualification Levels</b>	<b>Basic</b> 	<b>38F3 Qualified Level</b>	<b>Senior</b> 	<b>Master</b> 
<b>Education, Training and Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Completion of IFSOC (CGOs)</li> <li>➤ Completion of Force Support Basic &amp; Intermediate Competencies Course (FGOs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Completion of IFSOC (CGOs)</li> <li>➤ Completion of FOUT within 96 IDT periods</li> <li>➤ 96 IDT periods of experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Completion of all 38F3 skill level requirements</li> <li>➤ Completion of Force Support Intermediate Competency Course</li> <li>➤ 96 IDT periods as a flight commander, section commander or 38F4 staff position (e.g., 48 IDTs as Flt/CC &amp; 48 IDTs as Section CC)</li> <li>➤ 7 Satisfactory Participation years in AFSC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Completion of Force Support Advanced Competency Course</li> <li>➤ 96 IDT periods as an operations officer, deputy director, squadron commander, or 38F4 staff position</li> <li>➤ 15 Satisfactory Participation years in AFSC</li> </ul>

**Figure 8.**

## Section E: Education and Training

- 1. Available 38F Education & Training:** All 38F education and training guidance is located on the new 38F milSuite page (<https://www.milsuite.mil/book/community/spaces/forcesupport>) under the “CFM Corner” tab. It includes the following documents:
  - a. IFSOC Course Training Standard
  - b. Follow-on Unit Training Program (*in revision*)
  - c. 38F Course Catalog
2. Additionally, the 38F milSuite also has base level best practices and guides to include the Operations Officer Guide and Section Commander Guide.
3. You may also continue to access the legacy page at the link below until we officially sunset the website in CY23. <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/usaf-force-support-officer-38f>



As 38Fs, we are the advisors to the men and women of the Department of the Air Force. It is our responsibility to understand our programs, systems and most importantly our most precious resource, our Airmen. It is our Airmen, who are the front line for our support architecture and meeting the mission, whether at a Child Development Center, the dining facility or at the military personnel flight. The environment in which we operate is changing and so should we. I encourage each and everyone of you to embrace this innovative spirit, that is the essence of being called an Airmen, and look for new and creative ways of operationalizing what we do to SUPPORT the FORCE.